The Eighth Plan allocation is Rs. 8 crores.

Aged Couples in Neglected State

1439. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that most of the aged couples of the country are in a neglected state in-side and outside their houses;

(b) whether Government have enquired into the reasons therefor;

(c) what schemes Government propose to launch for their welfare together with the details thereof; and

(d) by when these are likely to be implemented ?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) A new Scheme of Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for Programmes relating to the Aged was launched in 1992-93 with a budget provision of Rs. 1 crore. The scheme aims at providing physical, social, emotional, psychological and economic support to the aged. The object of the scheme is to encourage voluntary organisations to provide old-age homes, day-care centres, medicare services, foster care/adoption services and non-institutional services for the aged. Grant-in-aid is provided on the basis of applications received through the State Governments. A provision of Rs. 3 crore has been made under this scheme for 1993-94.

Prevalence of Devadasi System

1440. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether "Devadasi' system is still prevalent in some parts of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken so far to prohibit the system and to evolve a rehabilitation project for Devadasis to help them earn their livelihood with honour and dignity ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT) (SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESHWARI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement is attached.

Statement

There is no specific law enacted by the Central Government for prohibiting the devadasi system in the country. However, this system attracts the provisions of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act,1956 (ITPA) as amended in 1978 and 1986. The Act envisages setting up of protective homes or corrective institutions for the care, protection treatment, education and rehabilitation of the rescued women and girls.

The State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra have their own Acts viz. :

1. A.P. Devadasis (Prohibition of Dedication) Act 1988.

2. Karnataka Devadasis (Prohibition of Dedication) Act 1982.

3. Bombay Protection of Devadasis Act 1934.

The State Governments have taken various rehabilitation measures with respect to the Devadasis system prevailing in their States.

Andhra Pradesh

A number of measures have been initiated by the State Government for the socio-economic rehabilitation of Devadasis. The basic objective of these efforts is to secure economic independence for these women. The change in their economic conditions would certainly bring about the required social change in their Social status. The State Government is providing home sites/housing facilities for women. The children of Devadasis are admitted into the schools and hospitals. The Devadasis about 60 years of age are sanctioned pensions. Land is also provided to Devadasis on a preferential basis. Various programmes for skill development such as polishing, soap making, papad making, candle making, exercise book making etc., are undertaken by the State Government. The State Government proposes to open adult Education Centres and medical and health care units for Devadasis in each district. The State Government is keen to encourage non-governmental organisations who are making efforts to bring about changes in the life of these women.

Maharashtra

To curb the evil practice of Devadasi, the State Government of Maharashtra have launched the following programmes :

1. Financial Assistance to unmarried devadasis for their daughters;

2. Vocational Training Centres for Devadasis; and

3. Opening of hostels for devadasis' children.

Karnataka

The Government of Karnataka has taken the following steps to rehabilitate the Devadasis in the State :

1. A special Cell has been created in the Directorate of Women Child Development.

2. They have started a Juvenile Home at Soundatti and State Home at Athani to provide education, vocational training and rehabilitation for women who would otherwise become devadasis.

3. 415 homeless devadasi women have been provided with Janatha Houses in Belgaum District;

4. 74 Devadasi women have been assisted under DWCRA Scheme in Bijapur District.

The Government has taken up programmes for rehabilitation of devadasis in 6 districts of Belgaum, Bijapur, Bellary, Raichur, Dharwar and Gulbarga which have been identified as having a large number of Devadasis with the help of Deputy Commissioners, the SC/ST Development Corporation and the Women's Development Corporation.

Baiga Development Authority

1441. SHRI SHIV PRASAD CHANPURIA : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) what is the total amount spent by Baiga Development Authority, Dindori, District Mandla in Madhya Pradesh as on 31st March, 1993 for the